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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the results of a series of surveys designed to determine the attitudes of parents of school-aged children and other adults toward schools and their children's future, with a view toward offering encouragement to beginning teachers. Cross sections of the population were sampled nationwide, throughout the state of Illinois, and in the metropolitan Chicago area in three separate surveys. Results indicate that most parents identify schools as the most important factor in helping their children achieve a good life. Few name school as deleterious to their children's success. In addition, a majority feel that schools would do an even better job if they had more money. The results of the Chicago survey are broken down by place of residence in the metropolitan area, sex, and selected population segments. (DDO)

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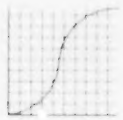

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THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

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THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

"Where are you, Mr. Chips?"

Dear Mr. Chips! That indefatigable do-gooder, serenely pumping knowledge, courage and high principles into his charges, while the world tottered around their classroom -- surely if there were ever a time when we needed a revival of the Mr. Chips spirit among young teachers, it is now.

New teachers today enter a world where they are expected to prepare students for an environment which even the wisest adult cannot envision beyond the next few years. What can we tell these beginning teachers that will send them forth with courage and a feeling of mission?

I believe there is one final piece of counsel we can give to them, documented here, that can hearten and perhaps even guide them in years ahead:

> "As a teacher you will be virtually beyond blame. Society will not blame you for students who turn out badly; it is prepared to give you a hearty share of credit for those who succeed."

If a young teacher can be led to know, and then to understand, the implications of this, I believe he or she can operate thereafter with absolute conviction, free to focus on the real needs of the child, no matter how the world outside turns.

Everything we learn from parents today confirms that they are convinced that teachers are Good; and that anything a teacher does for their children beyond the expected will raise this evaluation to Great. Because schools take our children in at age six and give them back as adults, to the schools and teachers are ascribed much of the credit for their maturation. This has

created a remarkably protected position in our society for schools in general and teachers in particular.

Even when a child turns out badly, society (with parents at its center) blames everybody but the schools. In fact, the first thoughts of parents are apt to be that the child himself is at fault for his own failure: "Maybe there's something wrong with the kid -- bad character, learning disability -- after all, the same school's turning out plenty of good people..." Or blame for the child's failure may be placed on external factors: "Times are bad...gangs...dope...declining morals..." Even if education itself is called into question about an individual child's troubles, the System is given the final blame rather than the school itself: "Schools aren't getting enough money to do the job..." Schools are mentioned positively by parents five times for any single negative word that's spoken. And the teacher is last of all to be blamed.

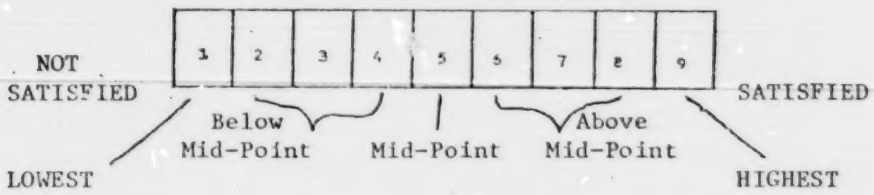
Secure in this relatively blameless environment, the young teacher should be able to operate as one of the very few persons functioning with certainty in an uncertain society. He or she should be able to leave students with the feeling that school was a constant, fixed point in a shifting world; if there was any one person who was steadfast and straight, and "knew what it was all about", it was the teacher.

In this milieu it should be helpful for the administrator and the teacher to know what ideals and preconceptions parents hold, so they can shape their programs accordingly. Here is what we have learned from parents in a series of cross-section surveys conducted this spring (April and May of 1974) starting with national samplings and then focusing to the State of Illinois, and finally, on the Metropolitan Area of Chicago:

In the April, 1974 national survey, 29% of the total sample rated their children's chances for a good life at the highest point on the scale, and the balance expressed some dissatisfaction with their children's chances for a good life. Those expressing complete dissatisfaction with their children's chances for a good life constituted 7% of the total sample and 9% of those with children at home whose youngest child was under 12 years of age.

The majority of the respondents with children aged 18 years and younger at home rate their children's chances for a good life below the highest point on the scale, but well above the lowest point, indicating that they feel their child has a chance for a good life but that there is no certainty that the child will achieve that good life.

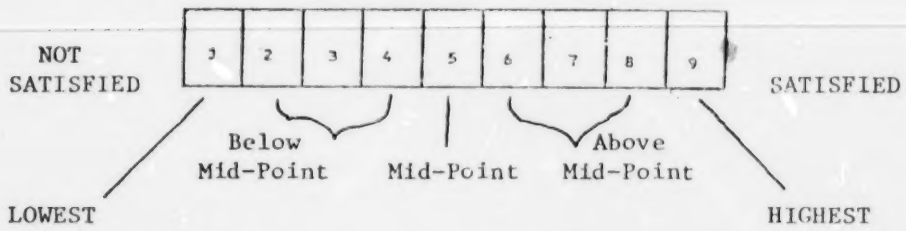
"Do you feel satisfied with, or would you like to change your children's chances for a good life?"



	STAGE IN LIFE CYCLE ... CHILD 18 YEARS OR YOUNGER AT TIME:					
	All Respondents	No Children Under 12	Oldest Child Under 12	Oldest Child Over 12	No Children 40-65	No Children 65 And Over
	(1002)	(135)	(256)	(270)	(203)	(120)
ALL RESPONDENTS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Highest	29	9	37	29	29	33
Above Mid-Point	27	25	29	34	20	21
Mid-Point	12	11	10	12	16	9
Below Mid-Point	10	6	12	14	7	8
Lowest	7	4	9	7	9	3
Not Answering	15	44	3	4	19	26

Respondents' optimism about their own personal or family situation does not seem to carry over directly to their satisfaction with their children's chances for a good life. In other words, parents are not more inclined to feel optimistic about their children's chances for a good life just because they are optimistic about their own life in the coming year. In fact, it is the group who feel that their situation in the coming year will be the same as it is in the current year who are most likely to be satisfied with their children's chances for a good life. However, those who are optimistic and feel they will be better off next year are more likely to be satisfied with their children's chances for a good life than are those who are pessimistic and feel they will be worse off in the coming year.

"Do you feel satisfied with, or would you like to change your children's chances for a good life?"



	OUTLOOK FOR YOUR FAMILY A YEAR FROM NOW:		
	Better Off	Same	Worse Off
	(369)	(418)	(215)
ALL RESPONDENTS	100%	100%	100%
Highest	28	32	23
Above Mid-Point	32	24	26
Mid-Point	11	11	14
Below Mid-Point	10	9	13
Lowest	7	5	11
Not Answering	12	19	13

Schools and education dominate the reasons that respondents, particularly those with children at home, give in response to the open-ended question, "What do you find good or satisfying about your children's chances for a good life?". The characteristics of the child are second most likely to be mentioned as the reason the child is likely to have a good life, and then come mentions of good jobs and economic opportunities, particularly for respondents who are now over 40 years old and do not have any child at home. The role of the parents or the family is mentioned with sharply less frequency than is the school, the child's own abilities, or the economic condition of the country. Religion, environment and family connections are hardly mentioned at all in explaining why a child has a chance for a good life.

"What do you find good or satisfying about your children's chances for a good life?"

		STAGE IN LIFE CYCLE				
	TOTAL	NO CHILDREN UNDER 40	OLDEST CHILD UNDER 12	OLDEST CHILD OVER 12	NO CHILDREN 40-65	NO CHILDREN OVER 65
	(1002)	(135)	(256)	(270)	(203)	(120)
ALL RESPONDENTS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Schools, good education	29	10	37	42	24	14
Personal Character, Intelligence, Independent	27	7	27	36	28	32
Good Jobs, Opportunity	16	5	12	14	22	31
Good Parents	12	12	23	12	3	-
Better Environment	5	4	7	6	4	1
Religion	5	2	8	5	4	4
Future, Marriage and Family of Own	5	-	2	3	9	15
Family Connections, Good Family	3	2	4	4	2	3
Youth, Faith in Young People	3	-	2	4	4	1
Good Recreation, Activities	2	1	2	2	2	1
Other	3	3	4	4	3	-
Nothing, Not Answering	22	63	7	8	27	30

Respondents are not inclined to identify bad schools as something that hurts a child's chances for a good life.

When asked what is not-so-good or satisfying about their children's chances for a good life, respondents are most likely to name a societal ill, such as the cost of living (15%), crime and drugs (14%), over population and pollution (7%), or to blame the child or "rebellious youth, low morals". Bad schools and the lack of educational opportunities (no adequate schools) are mentioned by only 7% of the sample as a reason for a child not having a chance for a good life. When parents of teenagers explain what is hurting their children's chances for a good life, schools are mentioned with less frequency than is the cost of living, crime or low morals. Other reasons for not being satisfied with the child's chances for a good life are: no jobs or racial discrimination (5%), too much pressure on youth (2%), and bad family situation (2%).

"What is not-so-good or satisfying about your children's chances for a good life?"

		STAGE IN LIFE CYCLE				
	TOTAL	NO CHILDREN UNDER 40	OLDEST CHILD UNDER 12	OLDEST CHILD OVER 12	NO CHILDREN 40-65	NO CHILDREN OVER 65
	(1002)	(135)	(256)	(270)	(203)	(120)
ALL RESPONDENTS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Cost of Living, Inflation	15	7	16	15	16	23
Crime, Drugs	14	4	20	17	12	6
Low Morals, Rebellious Youth	10	4	14	14	7	5
Over Population, Pollution, War	7	5	10	8	4	5
Bad Schools, Lack of Education	7	4	9	12	2	2
Bad Government, Lack of Freedom	7	8	10	8	4	1
No Job Opportunities, Racial Discrimination	5	4	2	9	5	4
Too Much Pressure on Youth	2	4	2	3	2	2
Bad Health, Illness, Handicap	2	-	1	2	2	7
Bad Family Situation	2	1	1	2	2	3
Other	2	1	3	2	2	3
Nothing, Not Answering	42	65	33	28	52	47

The lesson to be learned from the national survey data is that, when people scan the universe to identify what is helping children's chances for a good life, they are more likely to identify schools than any other agent. Further, when asked to scan the universe to identify what might be hurting their children's chances for a good life, they are quite unlikely to identify schools.

While this pattern obtains for the national survey just cited, as well as a number of other similar studies that we have done, it still begs the question of how the public feels about schools when schools are singled out for evaluation.

A May, 1974 survey of a case sampling of 116 men and women provides data that should reassure young teachers that schools will be regarded as <u>good</u> and will not be down-rated even when singled out for attention.

For example, the Illinois survey shows only 10% of the sample rating schools as "very poor" compared to 19% who rate them as "very good". A preponderant majority (71%) rate them at or above the mid-point.

"How would you rate the public schools in this area?"

	ALL (116)
ALL RESPONDENTS	100%
Very good	19
Good	30
In-Between	22
Poor	16
Very Poor	10
Not Answering	3

71

ILLINOIS MAY, 1974

The public belief is that schools, though good, would do even better if they had more money. When asked if schools should get more money, eight out of ten (80%) of the Illinois respondents with children and over half of those without children at home say "yes", schools should get more money from the government.

"Would you like to see schools get more money than they are now getting from Government?"

	ALL	HAVE CHILDREN	NO CHILDREN	
			Age to 40 and Under	Age Over 40
	(116)	(50)	(18)	(48)
ALL RESPONDENTS	100%	100%	100%	100%
No	28	20	11	44
Yes	69	80	78	52
Not Answering	2	--	11	4

When asked directly, a majority express their faith in the ability of schools to do a better job if they had more money.

"Specifically, do you feel more money from government would mean better schools?"

	ALL	HAVE CHILDREN	NO CHILDREN	
			Age to 40 And Under	Age Over 40
	(116)	(50)	(18)	(48)
ALL RESPONDENTS	100%	100%	100%	100%
No	43	36	50	48
Yes	52	62	50	44
Not Answering	4	2	--	8

A majority of the respondents feel that they would be willing to pay more taxes to the state to support education. Further, when told that the tax increase would run about seven dollars per person (almost $30 a year for a four person family), the majority favoring the tax increase widens.

"And, assuming the state increased its share of money, would you be willing to pay a higher rate of state taxes to support education?" ( )NO ( )YES

"It would amount to approximately $7 for each person -- man, woman, child -- in your family. Would you be willing to pay increased taxes in this amount?" ( )NO ( )YES

	ALL	HAVE CHILDREN	NO CHILDREN	
			Age to 40 and Under	Age Over 40
	(116)	(50)	(18)	(48)
ALL RESPONDENTS	100%	100%	100%	100%
... Willing to Pay Higher				
No	41	32	22	56
Yes	57	62	78	44
Not Answering	2	6	--	--
... Willing to Pay $7				
No	34	28	6	52
Yes	64	68	94	48
Not Answering	2	4	--	--

ILLINOIS - MAY 1974

Surveys conducted in the Chicago Metropolitan area in May of 1974 provide a closer view of how schools and teachers are thought of by parents and how the feelings of parents relate to where they live in the Metropolitan Area, to their sex and to the segment of the population in which they have membership.

As was observed in the national survey, schools and education are mentioned more often than any other factors when parents are asked to name the things that determine their child's chances for a good life. Men are more likely to name schools than are women. Women are more likely than men to identify home life and the neighborhood as important influences on a child's future, but even women mention schools more often than any other factor in describing determinants for their child's future.

Seven out of ten parents (70%) spontaneously mention schools, while home life is mentioned by only 46% of the parents in describing what determines their child's chances for a good life. Interestingly, Latino, working class white and black parents are more likely to name schools as important to their children's chances for a good life than are suburban whites.

PEOPLE WITH CHILDREN IN ELEMENTARY OR HIGH SCHOOL

"What do you feel are the most important things that will determine your children's chances for a good life? What will determine their futures as adults?"

	CHICAGO/METRO AREA... MALES AND FEMALES					FEMALES IN SELECTED POPULATION SEGMENTS		
		PLACE OF RESIDENCE		SEX				
	ALL METRO	CITY OF CHICAGO	SUBURBS	MALE	FEMALE	WHITE in city working class area	BLACK	SPANISH, LATINO
ALL RESPONDENTS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Schools Education	70	82	65	75	66	83	78	86
Home life	46	39	51	33	56	49	36	35
Neighborhood	21	19	22	15	25	23	7	10
Religion	13	13	12	13	12	12	5	9
A good job	6	14	2	9	4	11	30	22
Health	6	4	7	9	4	5	1	6
Intelligence	1	-	1	1	1	1	-	-
Other	3	4	2	2	3	-	3	2
Not answering	6	9	3	4	7	2	4	5

chicago metro MAY, 1974

The importance of the schools as a determinant of the child's future is emphasized when schools are singled out for special attention and parents are asked to rate the importance of the school in determining a child's chances for a good life.

PEOPLE WITH CHILDREN IN ELEMENTARY OR HIGH SCHOOL

"Well, what about the grade schools and high schools, how important are they in determining your child's chances for a good life?

	CHICAGO/METRO AREA... MALES AND FEMALES					FEMALES IN SELECTED POPULATION SEGMENTS		
		PLACE OF RESIDENCE		SEX				
	ALL METRO	CITY OF CHICAGO	SUBURBS	MALE	FEMALE	WHITE in city working class area	BLACK	SPANISH, LATINO
ALL RESPONDENTS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Very important	87	90	86	84	89	93	90	94
Somewhat important	12	8	13	14	11	7	10	5
Not too important	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	1
Not important at all	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Not answering	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-

The importance that parents assign to schools is clearly a function of their belief in the ability of the schools to provide the child with the education the child needs and, more broadly, in providing the child with a good foundation for life. This is true for all population segments, although among the black, Latino and working class white city residents, equal emphasis is given to the schools as preparatory or prerequisite to their children's ability to get jobs.

PEOPLE WITH CHILDREN IN ELEMENTARY OR HIGH SCHOOL

"Well, what about the grade schools and high schools, how important are they in determining your child's chances for a good life? Why is that?

	CHICAGO/METRO AREA... MALES AND FEMALES					FEMALES IN SELECTED POPULATION SEGMENTS		
		PLACE OF RESIDENCE		SEX				
	ALL METRO	CITY OF CHICAGO	SUBURBS	MALE	FEMALE	WHITE in city working class area	BLACK	SPANISH, LATINO
ALL RESPONDENTS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
WHY SCHOOLS ARE IMPORTANT								
Good education is necessary	44	49	40	52	35	32	45	29
Good foundation	31	24	36	27	35	23	10	32
To get a job	19	18	19	12	25	27	37	29
They spend eight hours a day there	8	6	9	5	11	10	1	-
To get into college	4	6	3	4	4	3	4	2
Have better teachers	3	1	5	5	2	2	1	-
Learn job skills	2	3	1	4	-	3	7	2
Other	1	1	1	-	2	-	-	2

The idea that Chicago area parents believe that their schools are imparting education and preparation for life to their children tends to be confirmed when parents are asked to rate their own children's progress against the progress of children who attend other schools. Specifically, of all parents, only 7% feel that their child is falling behind children in other schools. Over half (53%) feel their child is getting ahead of children of the same age in other schools, and 37% feel their child is staying even with children in other schools. However, black and, to a lesser extent, Latino parents are on average somewhat less confident about their children's progress.

PEOPLE WITH CHILDREN IN ELEMENTARY OR HIGH SCHOOL

"Getting right down to it, do you feel this child is getting ahead, falling behind or staying even with children in other schools for each year he/she spends in his/her present school/ Why do you say that?"

	CHICAGO/METRO AREA... MALES AND FEMALES					FEMALES IN SELECTED POPULATION SEGMENTS		
		PLACE OF RESIDENCE		SEX				
	ALL METRO	CITY OF CHICAGO	SUBURBS	MALE	FEMALE	WHITE in city working class area	BLACK	SPANISH, LATINO
ALL RESPONDENTS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Ahead	53	51	54	57	51	51	32	48
Behind	7	8	7	3	11	3	15	10
Even	37	38	38	38	37	44	51	37
Not answering	2	3	1	2	2	2	1	6

The most frequently given reason for feeling that their child is getting ahead is the good grades their child brings home. The next most frequent reason given is the quality of the school itself. Only 6% of the parents say their child is falling behind children of the same age in other schools because their school is not good.

PEOPLE WITH CHILDREN IN ELEMENTARY OR HIGH SCHOOL

"Getting right down to it, do you feel this child is getting ahead, falling behind or staying even with children in other schools for each year he/she spends in his/her present school/ Why do you say that?"

	CHICAGO/METRO AREA... MALES AND FEMALES					FEMALES IN SELECTED POPULATION SEGMENTS		
		PLACE OF RESIDENCE		SEX				
	ALL METRO	CITY OF CHICAGO	SUBURBS	MALE	FEMALE	WHITE in city working class area	BLACK	SPANISH, LATINO
ALL RESPONDENTS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
WHY BEHIND?	7	8	7	8	1	3	15	10
Poor schools/education	6	7	5	3	7	3	11	7
Other	2	1	2	-	3	1	4	-
WHY AHEAD?	53	51	54	57	51	51	32	48
High grades	30	37	26	41	23	30	29	23
Good school	18	11	22	14	20	15	1	22
Compared with other kids	6	3	7	3	9	8	1	2
Looked at text books	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2
Not answering	1	1	1	-	1	-	-	1
WHY EVEN?	37	38	38	38	37	44	51	37
On a par with other kids	22	20	24	25	21	27	34	27
Doing his best	10	13	9	9	11	9	4	4
Other	1	3	1	1	2	3	-	-
Not answering	4	3	4	3	4	5	12	5

Good teachers are mentioned more often than any other factor when parents explain why their schools are good. This is the case in every population segment, including Latino, black and residents of working class white city neighborhoods.

PEOPLE WITH CHILDREN IN ELEMENTARY OR HIGH SCHOOL

"What would you say are the good things about the schools here?"

	CHICAGO/METRO AREA... MALES AND FEMALES					FEMALES IN SELECTED POPULATION SEGMENTS		
		PLACE OF RESIDENCE		SEX				
	ALL METRO	CITY OF CHICAGO	SUBURBS	MALE	FEMALE	WHITE in city working class area	BLACK	SPANISH, LATINO
ALL RESPONDENTS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Quality of teachers	43	28	51	36	48	41	49	37
Program	29	24	32	27	30	20	13	14
Good education	18	17	18	16	20	20	24	33
Class size	12	6	14	12	11	4	4	1
Building	9	3	12	13	6	3	4	2
Discipline/strict	8	7	9	5	11	21	-	12
Location	7	10	5	9	5	7	6	5
Parochial/private	4	8	1	4	4	7	-	2
Other	8	6	9	11	7	7	6	-
Nothing	4	7	3	4	4	4	10	2
Not answering	11	20	7	21	4	6	6	10

Quality of teaching is mentioned spontaneously by only about one in ten (11%) parents when they are asked to criticize the schools. Gangs and poor discipline are mentioned more frequently than are teachers, but by only 14% of the population. Gangs as a complaint about schools is mentioned as frequently among suburban residents as among inner city blacks. Latino parents appear to have a more pervasive concern about gangs than any other segment of the population. One out of three (34%) parents could not think of any complaint.

PEOPLE WITH CHILDREN IN ELEMENTARY OR HIGH SCHOOL

"What are the not-so-good things about the schools here?"

	CHICAGO/METRO AREA... MALES AND FEMALES					FEMALES IN SELECTED POPULATION SEGMENTS		
		PLACE OF RESIDENCE		SEX				
	ALL METRO	CITY OF CHICAGO	SUBURBS	MALE	FEMALE	WHITE in city working class area	BLACK	SPANISH, LATINO
ALL RESPONDENTS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Nothing	34	27	38	33	34	34	37	33
Discipline/gangs	14	14	14	12	16	8	11	18
Quality of teachers	11	14	9	9	12	13	13	7
Class size	11	17	7	9	12	9	10	2
Poor education	6	8	5	7	6	1	10	-
Incomplete program	5	1	5	5	4	4	1	6
Dope	4	3	4	7	2	7	-	2
Building	3	6	1	5	1	6	7	13
Location	3	1	4	1	4	4	3	-
Lack of equipment, books, supplies	-	-	-	-	-	1	7	-
Other	8	6	9	5	11	15	4	8
Not answering	6	17	1	11	2	6	13	13

The high regard that parents have for their schools, regardless of the population segment questioned, is further confirmed by the high percentage (79%) who when pressed to identify a deficiency in the school, steadfastly maintain that their school has all that their child needs or could benefit from. The possible exception is black parents, but even among blacks, where complaints about the limitations of the school are voiced by 32% of respondents, complaints about teaching are expressed by 15% of the respondents. Among all parents, only 6% voice complaints about the lack of good teachers as a deficiency of the school their child attends.

PEOPLE WITH CHILDREN IN ELEMENTARY OR HIGH SCHOOL

"Well, specifically, does this school provide the child with everything he/she needs or could benefit from? What's missing?"

	CHICAGO/METRO AREA... MALES AND FEMALES					FEMALES IN SELECTED POPULATION SEGMENTS		
		PLACE OF RESIDENCE		SEX				
	ALL METRO	CITY OF CHICAGO	SUBURBS	MALE	FEMALE	WHITE in city working class area	BLACK	SPANISH, LATINO
ALL RESPONDENTS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
YES	79	69	85	82	76	80	67	88
NO	19	24	14	13	23	20	32	9
WHAT'S MISSING?								
Other	7	7	6	1	11	7	3	*
Good teachers	6	6	5	5	7	2	15	*
Lacking adequate books, supplies	2	4	1	-	3	1	8	2
Vocational education	1	-	2	1	2	4	-	1
Religion	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Not answering	2	7	-	4	1	6	7	5

To find out if there were anything else that schools could do for their children that current schools were not doing, parents were asked to think about the specific needs of their own child, and how these needs are served by the school. Parents, in response to this question, spontaneously, most often praise the quality of teaching, and next most often praise the variety of courses offered.

PEOPLE WITH CHILDREN IN ELEMENTARY OR HIGH SCHOOL
(Interviewer asked parent to think of one child selected at random.)

"Well, every child has different needs and interests. Thinking of your ___year old in the ___ grade, what does his/her school offer or have that you feel is particularly good for him/her?"

	CHICAGO/METRO AREA... MALES AND FEMALES					FEMALES IN SELECTED POPULATION SEGMENTS		
		PLACE OF RESIDENCE		SEX				
	ALL METRO	CITY OF CHICAGO	SUBURBS	MALE	FEMALE	WHITE in city working class area	BLACK	SPANISH, LATINO
ALL RESPONDENTS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Quality of teachers	26	21	28	26	25	19	11	42
Variety of courses	21	18	22	18	22	23	14	2
Reading program	14	15	12	17	11	11	17	2
Physical education, sports	14	13	16	10	18	15	6	2
Good basic skills	10	17	7	12	9	12	7	54
Vocational education	6	6	6	12	2	6	7	9
Extra-curricular activities	5	4	6	7	4	11	6	2
Religion	3	3	3	-	5	7	-	2
College prep	2	1	2	2	2	6	-	2
Other	10	10	10	3	16	9	6	5
Nothing	14	8	13	13	16	11	37	7

When asked what it is about their school that is not-so-good in light of the specific needs of their child, two out of three (68%) parents cannot think of anything to complain about. The single most frequent complaint is class size. Most complaints are scattered reflecting the variety of perceptions parents have of their children. The exception is the 24% of Latino parents who complain about the lack of problem-learning or special-learning programs, indicating a desire for better bilingual or English language instruction.

PEOPLE WITH CHILDREN IN ELEMENTARY OR HIGH SCHOOL

"And what is not-so-good for him/her?"

	CHICAGO/METRO AREA... MALES AND FEMALES					FEMALES IN SELECTED POPULATION SEG		
		PLACE OF RESIDENCE		SEX				
	ALL METRO	CITY OF CHICAGO	SUBURBS	MALE	FEMALE	WHITE in city working class area	BLACK	SPANISH, LATINO
ALL RESPONDENTS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Nothing Not Good	68	75	66	74	64	65	69	46
Something Not Good	32	25	34	26	36	35	31	54
Class-Size	6	4	7	3	7	3	-	3
No Discipline	3	7	6	5	7	11	14	13
No Problem Learning Program - bilingual	1	-	1	-	2	3	3	24
Other, e.g., no lunch program, sex education, price too high	16	14	15	9	21	12	13	14

Even though parents feel strongly about the ability of their school to serve the special needs of their child, they do accept the idea that there is something that a school can offer that is not offered by their school.

When asked if they could think of a school that offered everything that their child needs, two-thirds (63%) could think of one. Within the metro area as a whole, 45% of the parents feel that the extra advantage is offered by a public school, 8% by a private school, and 5% by a parochial school. Black, Latino, and working class white city parents are more inclined to see extra advantages in parochial schools than are parents in the metro area at large.

PEOPLE WITH CHILDREN IN ELEMENTARY OR HIGH SCHOOL

"Do you know of any school that does provide this for their pupils? Is this public, private or parochial?"

	CHICAGO/METRO AREA... MALES AND FEMALES					FEMALES IN SELECTED POPULATION SEGMENTS		
		PLACE OF RESIDENCE		SEX				
	ALL METRO	CITY OF CHICAGO	SUBURBS	MALE	FEMALE	WHITE in city working class area	BLACK	SPANISH, LATINO
ALL RESPONDENTS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
NO	38	35	30	58	29	33	57	50
YES	63	65	70	42	71	44	30	25
PUBLIC	45	41	55	33	50	26	4	18
PRIVATE	8	12	5	-	11	-	22	10
PAROCHIAL	5	12	-	8	4	19	22	19
NOT ANSWERING	5	-	10	-	7	22	13	2

There are striking differences in the perception that parents have of the role that public, private and parochial schools can play in the child's development. Briefly, public schools are seen as providing children with experience with a variety of people as a preparation for life in a heterogeneous society. Parochial schools are seen as giving the child discipline. Private schools are seen as providing the child with expanded opportunities for learning and education. All the roles are seen as good. So, a young teacher can elect service in a public, private or parochial school without risking loss of the immunity accorded by parents to the teaching profession at large.

PEOPLE WITH CHILDREN IN ELEMENTARY OR HIGH SCHOOL

"And overall, do you feel your child is better off attending a public, private, or parochial school? Why is that?"

	CHICAGO/METRO AREA... MALES AND FEMALES					FEMALES IN SELECTED POPULATION SEGMENTS		
		PLACE OF RESIDENCE		SEX				
	ALL METRO	CITY OF CHICAGO	SUBURBS	MALE	FEMALE	WHITE in city working class area	BLACK	SPANISH, LATINO
ALL RESPONDENTS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Public Better	58	29	73	60	56	35	51	47
Private Better	10	14	7	9	11	10	32	13
Parochial Better	27	46	17	25	29	47	14	37
Not answering	5	10	2	4	5	8	4	4

"And overall, do you feel your child is better off attending a public, private, or parochial school? Why is that?

	CHICAGO/METRO AREA... MALES AND FEMALES					FEMALES IN SELECTED POPULATION SEGMENTS		
		PLACE OF RESIDENCE		SEX				
	ALL METRO	CITY OF CHICAGO	SUBURBS	MALE	FEMALE	WHITE in city working class area	BLACK	SPANISH, LATINO
ALL RESPONDENTS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
WHY PUBLIC SCHOOL BETTER	58	29	73	60	56	35	51	47
Variety of people	24	4	35	24	25	9	8	6
Good school, good education	20	11	25	22	19	11	12	8
Expense	8	9	8	6	10	7	10	12
Variety of subjects	7	6	7	12	2	4	3	1
All the same	2	4	1	1	2	4	7	17
Depends on child	1	5	2	1	2	3	8	1
Discipline	1	1	1	2	1	2	-	-
Other	3	-	4	3	2	2	-	6
Not answering	2	1	2	1	2	-	4	1
WHY PRIVATE SCHOOL BETTER	10	14	7	9	11	10	32	13
Better education	5	7	4	5	5	4	19	6
More concern for the child	2	3	1	2	2	3	14	7
Class size	2	4	1	1	3	2	11	-
Discipline	2	-	3	-	3	3	1	1
Other	-	1	-	1	-	1	1	-
Religion	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-
WHY PAROCHIAL SCHOOL BETTER	27	46	17	25	29	47	14	37
Better education	9	22	2	11	8	9	5	8
Discipline	13	17	11	11	14	23	7	2
Religion	22	19	29	20	25	10	4	12
More concern for the child	7	15	1	10	5	13	3	9
Class size	3	6	1	4	2	2	-	7
Other	10	8	11	12	7	4	1	5
Not answering	3	3	-	8	-	1	-	2

To gauge the importance to the parent of the extra benefits that special schools could provide, parents were asked to rate their interest in paying tuition for their child.

The costs quoted were $1,000 a year for full tuition to a special school, or $200 per course to a school that would supplement the child's regular education.

A substantial percentage of parents (40%) do not entirely reject the idea of paying extra to get something extra in the way of education for their child. More than a fourth, (27%) rate their interest in enrolling their child in a superior school for $1,000 a year at or above the mid-point of the scale. A greater percent (42%) rate their interest in paying $200 a year for supplemental education at or above the mid-point.

PEOPLE WITH CHILDREN IN ELEMENTARY OR HIGH SCHOOL

"If there was a private school around here that could promise your child all the help and learning opportunities he/she could benefit from, how would you rate your chances of sending him/her there if the yearly tuition was $1,000?"

	CHICAGO/METRO AREA... MALES AND FEMALES					FEMALES IN SELECTED POPULATION SEGMENTS		
		PLACE OF RESIDENCE		SEX				
	ALL METRO	CITY OF CHICAGO	SUBURBS	MALE	FEMALE	WHITE in city working class area	BLACK	SPANISH, LATINO
ALL RESPONDENTS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Definately	6	6	6	5	7	4	4	5
Probably	8	11	5	13	3	4	4	14
Maybe-Maybe not	13	15	13	10	17	12	11	25
Probably not	13	24	12	16	16	31	4	17
Definately not	56	37	60	46	56	45	63	36
Not answering	5	7	4	11	1	4	14	4

PEOPLE WITH CHILDREN IN ELEMENTARY OR HIGH SCHOOL

"And, if he/she could be enrolled part-time for just selected subjects or areas at a yearly tuition of $200 per course, how would you rate your chances?"

	CHICAGO/METRO AREA... MALES AND FEMALES					FEMALES IN SELECTED POPULATION SEGMENTS		
		PLACE OF RESIDENCE		SEX				
	ALL METRO	CITY OF CHICAGO	SUBURBS	MALE	FEMALE	WHITE in city working class area	BLACK	SPANISH, LATINO
ALL RESPONDENTS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Definitely	10	8	8	10	7	5	7	7
Probably	13	20	14	17	16	9	11	14
Maybe-Maybe Not	19	18	19	15	21	22	14	34
Probably not	13	17	12	10	16	23	1	12
Definitely not	40	31	43	37	39	36	54	29
Not answering	5	6	4	10	-	5	13	4

The inference is that teachers and schools can ask for sharp increases in funds by promising to be better without implying that they are not already good.

Not only should new teachers feel secure about being praised for a child's maturation, and escaping blame for a child's failure, but the new teacher should feel secure about asking for more money than any educator who has faced an anxious school board would dare to ask.

Few indeed are the professions endowed with such a mandate. If we can transmit this faith to beginning teachers, I believe they will feel free to function happily in their professional role, secure in their knowledge of the unique value that society accords them.